

## The District 3 Slate

April 2003

County Supervisor Pam Slater

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County Supervisor  
**Pam Slater**

"**T**hese are the times that try a man's soul." Sage advice, especially in these days as proud American service men and women—including many based here in San Diego—battle in the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Our hearts and prayers go with these sons and daughters, fathers and mothers. May their bravery be rewarded with a clear, quick victory.

San Diegans are doing their part to support the troops. Efforts are under way, and I encourage you to help, to gather simple comforts for our troops. Items such as board games, toiletries, cards are all appreciated.

As a nation and as a region, we will get through this crisis. We are all Americans. This is our identity, our purpose.

*Pam Slater*

# Stores' Inaccurate Scanners Will Not Be Tolerated

**Y**ou are at your neighborhood pet store and find the most adorable cobalt blue collar for your pug puppy. Or you find a cute summer dress that is perfect for the upcoming fundraiser.

Or you are forced to run to the market for a gallon of milk and some cereal for the kids tomorrow morning.

In each instance, the price you thought the item was being sold for was not what you ended up paying. Was it improperly marked? Or is something else going on here?

Items from spark plugs to dog food, from a halter top to a softball, are being inaccurately scanned, resulting in San Diego consumers paying thousands of dollars annually in overcharges.

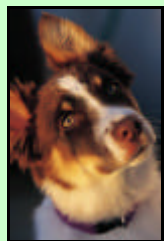
An investigation by county staff found five overcharges - averaging \$2.63 - for every one undercharge on promotional items sold in this county. Multiply that figure by hundreds of thousands of customers who make purchases each day and you will see the scope of this problem. This is unacceptable and this is why supervisors this month will review changes to in-



sure that store scanners are accurate.

These inaccuracies are reported across the retail sector - from pet stores to high-end retail clothing; from large grocery chains to small boutiques. In statistics compiled between July 1999 and February 2003, county investigators found scanners failing to record proper prices on 45 percent of items sold at drug stores upwards of 73 percent on items purchased at department stores.

This is not to say these miscalculations are intentional. Many are not. But the systems being used to scan products must be accurate. Anything less is consumer abuse.



### *FOCAS needs your assistance*

**F**OCAS - Friends Of County Animal Shelters - needs your support. The agency has been forced to place a temporary moratorium on accepting injured or sick animals due to a shortage of funds for medical care. This comes as FOCAS completes its most successful year in adopting out almost 1,200 cats and dogs. To help, call (619) 685-3536.

# Epilepsy Group Awarded \$25,000 Grant

**D**o you know what epilepsy is? You soon should, as Supervisor Pam Slater earmarked \$25,000 to the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County to better promote public awareness of the health condition.

The money will also be used to purchase much-needed educational materials and computer equipment.

"The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County plays a central role in helping people afflicted by this debilitating disorder," Supervisor Slater explains. "I hope the funds that I have directed to the Epilepsy Foundation will help the organization to better meet the needs of people with epilepsy and educate others about their medical condition."

People with epilepsy and their families often have great difficulty getting comprehensive and accurate information. Experts estimate 70 percent of the health information on the Internet is inaccurate. Varying language proficiencies, low literacy, or special cultural or other needs add to the lack of public awareness.

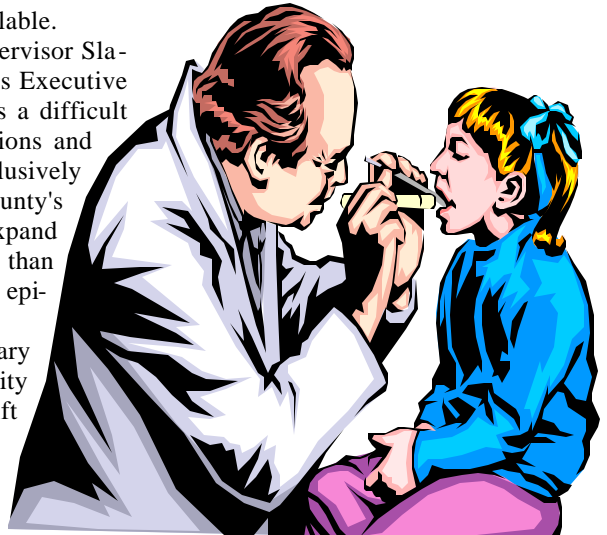
A portion of the county's gift will be used to create a resource library that will be used by staff, clients, health-care professionals and other service providers to ensure that current and accurate informa-

tion on epilepsy is readily available.

"We are so grateful to Supervisor Slater for this generous gift," says Executive Director Kathy West. "This is a difficult time for non-profit organizations and we currently exist almost exclusively on private donations. The county's significant gift will help us expand our free services for more than 30,000 San Diegans with epilepsy."

Sally B. Thornton, honorary chairman of Gingerbread City 2002, accepted the county's gift with Kathy West. Under Mrs. Thornton's guidance, Gingerbread City 2002 raised more than \$40,000 for the foundation, making it the most successful in the event's history.

"We applaud Supervisor Pam Slater's astute decision to provide a solution for the Epilepsy Foundation to expand its San Diego County educational and outreach programs," says Mrs. Thornton. "Supervisor Slater's generosity will help to increase community awareness to better serve even more people thus enhancing the quality-of-life for those who are affected by epilepsy. Pam Slater is a true champion of the people."



Epilepsy (recurring seizures) is a neurological disorder that affects more than two million people in the United States and 30,000 people here in San Diego County. Temporary electrical changes in the brain result in seizures, ranging from momentary staring spells to life-threatening convulsions. Leading causes of epilepsy are head injuries, strokes, tumors, birth defects and genetic tendencies.

*Call (619) 296-0161 for more information on the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County.*

## ***Stopping Animal Abuse Helps End Physical Abuse***

**A**pril is "Prevention of Animal Cruelty" month. Animal abuse is more than cruelty to an innocent puppy or kitten; experts now know animal abuse serves as a warning of greater violence against two-legged creatures.

Now you can learn how to recognize and prevent animal abuse during a special 6 to 7:30 p.m. April 17 seminar sponsored by the San Diego Humane Society.

Designed for teachers, social workers, community leaders and interested citizens, the seminar will teach how to make San Diego a safer place for pets and people alike. Call (619) 299-7012, ext. 249, for more information.

## Spring's Arrival Is The Time To Stop Spread Of West Nile Virus

**S**pring's arrival means longer, warmer days. It also means it is the start of mosquito season. This year, you can help vector-control officials prevent the outbreak of mosquito-borne diseases, especially the spread of the West Nile Virus.

The virus, which arrived in the United States in New York in 1999 and has spread across the humid South and Midwest, is spread to humans through mosquito bites. The first case reported in California was last September in Los Angeles.

Those most at risk are the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

Most people infected with West Nile Virus do not realize it. However, in rare cases, the flue-like symptoms progress to

encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and the spinal cord).

Standing water is the ideal environment for mosquitoes to breed; thus, eliminating all sources of standing water should be paramount. Sources of standing water include back-yard buckets or storage containers, old tires and planters.

Another tell-tail sign are dead birds. County health authorities advise that you report any incidents of dead birds or mosquito breeding areas by calling (858) 694-2888. For more information on the West Nile Virus and the county's response, visit the Department of Environmental Health's website at [www.scdcdh.org](http://www.scdcdh.org) or click on the link at the county's web page at [www.sdcounty.ca.gov](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov).

# Action Needed To Save Our Coastline

While lobbying members of Congress recently in Washington D.C., it became clear to me that coastal bluff protection and beach sand replenishment is not foremost on Congress' mind as it drafts the 2003-04 budget. This is not surprising.

Other issues of importance - and important to me - dominate the halls of Congress: The economy, transportation and discussions regarding international terrorism. But our efforts to secure just a small amount of money to help protect San Diego County's coastline from natural erosion and devastating storms - an important economic and environmental issue for the entire region - appears to be successful.

In meetings with the offices of Reps. Cunningham, Pelosi and Capps, and the federal Office of Management & Budget, we managed in two hours to make certain that beach sand replenishment and bluff protection are not forgotten during this federal budget cycle.

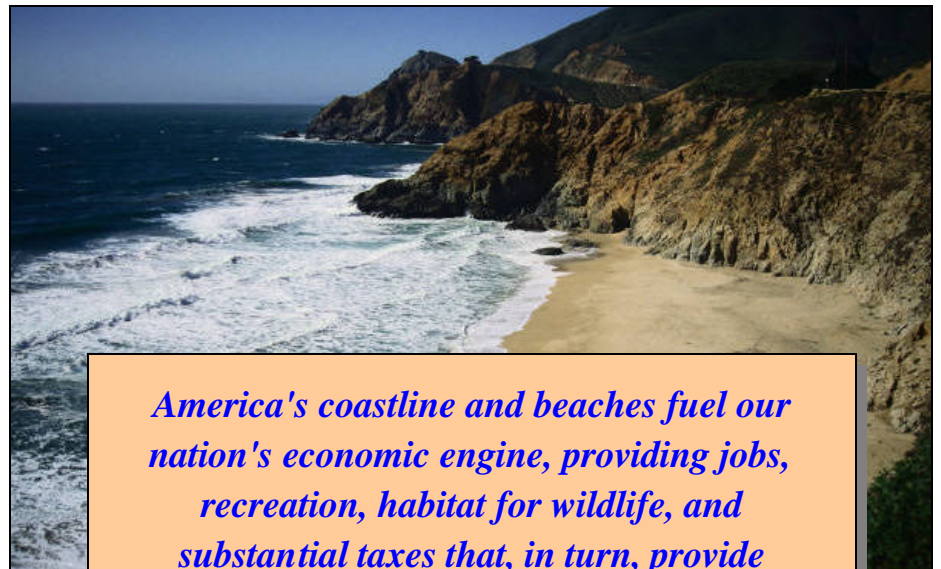
The lobbying effort was sponsored by the California Coastal Coalition, an organization I have worked with closely over the years to make certain San Diego County receives its fair share of federal and state coastal and beach protection dollars. A well-attended conference on coastal issues, sponsored by the American Coastal Coalition, hammered home the message that our coastal areas - unless maintained and protected - are in peril.

Congress, now in budget deliberations, has literally thousands upon thousands of budget items before it. For me, local freeway improvements, bolstering our economy, and coastal protection have my undivided attention. We must improve our freeways and road system. And we must protect our beaches.

Why? America's coastline and beaches fuel our nation's economic engine, providing jobs, recreation, habitat for wildlife, and substantial taxes that, in turn, provide support for roads, parks and libraries.

The majority of Americans live within 50 miles of the coast, and more people use our beaches than our national parks. Unlike the national parks, however, the federal government only pays a small portion of upkeep.

Coastal states earn 85 percent of all U.S. tourism revenues. Approximately 180



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million people vacation and recreate along the U.S. coasts every year. In California, beaches are the No. 1 tourist destination. Many coastal visitors come from other countries to enjoy our coastal resources and this foreign tourism bolsters our local economy.

Additionally, recreation is a booming growth industry, especially in San Diego County, where it ranks No. 3 in dollar generation. To put this in perspective, San Diego County's manufacturing, military defense spending, tourism and agriculture, in that order of production, create a diverse job base and tax base that usually means we are one of the last regions in the U.S. to feel a downturn in the economy.

The percentage of dollars spent on recreation in San Diego County and California follows a nationwide trend. In 1919, 3.6 percent of household dollars were spent on recreation. In year 2000, 8.5 percent was spent.

Clearly, our beaches are important to San Diego County's economy. Beach sand replenishment means beach recreational activities continue. Adding sand to the beaches provides the first line of defense against storms. It provides a measure of defense in helping to protect sensitive bluffs in such areas as La Jolla, Del Mar and north to Carlsbad. Bluff failure along our coast is a recurring problem. Bluff failure results in millions of dollars in

damage to homes and businesses.

First and foremost on our list was a request for \$250,000 in funding to complete a beach sand replenishment study. This study would help local governments up and down the state, identify coastal erosion problems, with an eye toward solutions. The study would monitor the natural cycle of sand erosion and replenishment, chart the tidal flows at high tide and low tide, and give local governments a better idea of how to enhance beach sand replenishment and provide bluff protection. Especially in the winter, when our coast is hard hit. Remember the 10- to 12-foot waves that rose over the rocks in Del Mar and Cardiff-by-the-Sea last year to threaten coastal restaurants?

Additionally, the study would identify the best sources for sand (donor sites) and where to put it to ensure lasting sand replenishment.

Scientists then monitor the results of the study. That helps us to craft an improved replenishment plan. Alternately, when beach sand replenishment programs are successful, this helps to increase federal funding for future beach nourishment projects.

Washington D.C. has important issues on their plate right now. But I am fighting for San Diego County's fair share for coastal protection, economic enhancement and transportation dollars.

## AROUND THE DISTRICT

### FEDERAL FUNDS AVAILABLE ...

**R**equests to earmark more than \$12 million in federal housing funds for low-income housing and community development are being reviewed by the County of San Diego. These federal funds are used to fund rental assistance programs, help meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and providing housing for people with AIDS and/or HIV. Supervisors will review the list and make their recommendations for funding at the April 29 meeting.

### ON SAFETY AND TERRORISM...

**A**s the Iraqi conflict intensifies, it is important that we never forget the people who wear the uniforms of the U.S. military. They are our sons and daughters, our uncles and cousins, our friends and coworkers. And they are risking their lives to defend the freedoms we cherish. To demonstrate its support for the troops, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed an eight-point resolution that affirms this county's support and our gratitude for our troops.

In other actions, supervisors:

- Authorized Chief Administrative Officer Walt Ekard to research whether members of the county's Health and Human Services Agency have the time and expertise to bird dog federal grants for faith-based community initiatives.
- Entered into agreements to secure Proposition 14 library funding for joint-use programs with the school district in Encinitas.
- Approved recommendations of the Cable Television Review Commission to award \$10,000 grants to five programs – "We Saw the Flames: Wildfire Prevention in San Diego County," "Designing For the Future," "San Diego Wildfire Emergencies," "San Diego County Regional Occupation Program" and "Tai Chi, Exercise for People With Arthritis."
- Approved 108 budgetary transfers as part of the second-quarter budget update.



### MAKING HER PITCH....

**Supervisor Slater throws out the first pitch of the season at the opening day ceremonies for San Dieguito Youth Softball. The Encinitas-based league has more than 300 girls competing in divisions ranging from 8U to 14U.**

#### **The staff of Supervisor Pam Slater**

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Sachiko Kohatsu (Land Use)  
Danae Ramirez (Health and Human Services)  
Jim Gonsalves (Housing)  
Todd Voorhees (Budget and Finance)  
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